

Message Text

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60/21

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2573

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 14590

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: MIKI PROSPECTS AS DIET DELIBERATIONS OPEN

SUMMARY: AS RESULT OF SEVERAL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, PROSPECTS FOR MIKI'S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM AND FOR HIS CONTINUED TENURE IN OFFICE HAVE INCREASED DRAMATICALLY, WE BELIEVE, IN RECENT DAYS. HE HAS GAINED PROMISES OF OPPOSITION COOPERATION IN DIET DELIBERATIONS, HIS INTRA-PARTY OPPOSITION IS IN DISARRAY, AND HE HAS CAREFULLY TOED THE LDP LINE ON SENSITIVE ISSUES. AS A RESULT, WHILE DIET SESSION WILL HAVE ITS STORMY MOMENTS, MIKI STANDS A GOOD CHANCE OF GETTING HIS PROGRAM THROUGH DIET AND PRESIDING OVER A GENERAL ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. PROSPECTS FOR PRIMIN MIKI'S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM IN CURRENT DIET SESSION HAVE BRIGHTENED CONSIDERABLY OVER
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PAST SEVERAL DAYS AND AS RESULT SO ALSO HAVE HIS CHANCES

OF REMAINING IN OFFICE AT LEAST THROUGH FORTHCOMING
GENERAL ELECTION (DECEMBER 5 REMAINS MOST LIKELY DATE).
MIKI'S IMPROVED CIRCUMSTANCES ARE RESULT OF SEVERAL THINGS.

--BY AGREEING TO MAKE MAJOR EFFORT TO IMPLEMENT
LONG-PENDING PAY RAISES FOR NATIONAL RAILWAY AND TELEPHONE
AND TELEGRAPH EMPLOYEES, HE PERSUADED SOHYO ON ONE HAND TO
CALL OFF THREATENED NATIONWIDE STRIKE AND JSP ON OTHER
HAND TO PARTICIPATE IN DIET DELIBERATIONS ON KEY BILLS TO
INCREASE RAILWAY AND TELEPHONE RATES (TOKYO 14508).

--IN WAKE OF MOST RECENT ATTEMPT TO OUST MIKI,
LDP APPEARS TO BE RELATIVELY UNITED ON NECESSITY OF PASSING
PENDING LEGISLATION AT THIS DIET.

--MIKI'S INTRA-PARTY OPPOSITION IS IN CONSIDERABLE
DISARRAY. (GOOD PART OF SEPTEMBER 28 PROCEEDINGS WERE
DEVOTED TO UNRULY SHOUTING MATCH BETWEEN KOMEITO AND JCP.)

--MIKI'S RECENT STATEMENTS ON LOCKHEED HAVE BEEN
MORE IN LINE WITH GENERAL SENTIMENTS OF HIS LDP COLLEAGUES.
HE HAS CONTINUED TO STRESS HIS DETERMINATION TO CLARIFY
LOCKHEED SCANDAL BUT AT SAME TIME HAS REJECTED OPPOSITION
DEMANDS FOR EXPOSURE OF "GREY AREA" NAMES AND CALLING
OF WITNESSES, INCLUDING DIET MEMBERS, TO TESTIFY BEFORE
DIET COMMITTEES, BY STATING THAT THESE WERE QUESTIONS FOR
A DIET CONSENSUS AND RESPECTIVE COMMITTEES TO DECIDE.

2. MOREOVER, IT HAS BECOME APPARENT IN PAST SEVERAL DAYS
THAT MIKI DIDNOT FARE FUIE SO BADLY IN SEPTEMBER 15
RESHUFFLING OF LDP LEADERSHIP POSTS AS HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN
THOUGHT. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY POINTED OUT, MIKI FAILED
TO GET HIS MAN MATSUNO APPROVED FOR POST OF PARTY SEC GEN,
BUT HE SUCCEEDED IN APPOINTING MIKI SUPPORTERS TO TWO OF
THREE KEY LDP POSTS AND THE THIRD, SEC GEN UCHIDA, ALTHOUGH
AN OHIRA MAN, IS OLD FRIEND OF MIKI'S, AND MANY OBSERVERS
EXPECT HIM TO COOPERATE WITH MIKI TO SOME EXTENT. AS RESULT
OF PARTY EXECUTIVE LINEUP, MIKI SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN
GOOD MEASURE OF CONTROL OVER PLANNING FOR PROMISED
OCTOBER LDP EXTRAORDINARY CONVENTION AND THUS AVOID HAVING
UNFRIENDLY ITEMS SUCH AS SUBMISSION OF MOTIONS CRITICAL
OF HIS LEADERSHIP PLACED ON AGENDA. TIMING OF CONVENTION
IS STILL UP IN AIR, BUT ODDS ARE THAT IT WILL NOT BE
HELD MUCH BEFORE END OF OCTOBER AND MUCH WILL DEPEND ON
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PROGRESS OF DIET BUSINESS.

3. MIKI'S OPPONENTS REMAIN AS EAGER AS BEFORE TO REPLACE
HIM BEFORE GENERAL ELECTION. THEY ARE STILL LICKING
THEIR WOUNDS FROM FAILURE OF THEIR LAST OUSTER ATTEMPT,
HOWEVER, AND APPEAR TO BE IN CONSIDERABLE DISARRAY.
DEFECTION OF RAIZO MATSUNO FROM FUKUDA FACTION WAS BLOW
TO FUKUDA AND LATTER'S REPEATED FAILURE TO ACT DECISIVELY

HAS AROUSED CRITICISM OF HIS LEADERSHIP ABILITIES, ESPECIALLY AMONG TANAKA FACTION MEMBERS. OPINION CONTINUES TO BE ABOUT EVENLY DIVIDED AS TO WHETHER FUKUDA AND OHIRA HAVE ACTUALLY AGREED ON AN ORDER OF SUCCESSION THAT WOULD LEAD TO MORE THAN A HALF-HEARTED ATTEMPT TO UNSEAT MIKI AT PARTY CONVENTION. MORE IMPORTANTLY, AS INEVITABLE ELECTION DRAWS NEAR, THERE ARE INCREASING RUMBLINGS FROM PARTY RANK-AND-FILE THAT ANOTHER MAJOR LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

4. UPSHOT IS THAT, WHILE THIS DIET SESSION WILL HAVE ITS STORMY MOMENTS AND OPPOSITION WILL MAKE AT LEAST PRO FORMA ATTEMPTS TO STALL PROCEEDINGS, FOR MOMENT MIKI STANDS GOOD CHANCE OF GETTING VERY NEARLY ALL OF HIS PROGRAMS THROUGH DIET. IF THIS TURNS OUT TO BE TRUE, IT WILL BECOME EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR MIKI'S ENEMIES TO TOPPLE HIM OR TO PREVENT HIM FROM DISSOLVING LOWER HOUSE AT AN ADVANTAGEOUS TIME AND CALLING ELECTION UNDER HIS OWN LEADERSHIP. A MISSTATEMENT ON LOCKHEED OR MAJOR NEW EXPOSURES IN LOCKHEED SCANDAL COULD, OF COURSE, CHANGE THIS PROGNOSIS OVERNIGHT.

5. ABOVE ASSESSMENT IS WIDELY SHARED BY COMMENTATORS AND POLITICIANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN IN RECENT DAYS, AND ONE EVEN HEARS TALK OF A THIRD MIKI CABINET AFTER GENERAL ELECTION.
HODGSON

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